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UNCLAS ATHENS 000350

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/TPP/ABT/BTT TOM LERSTEN AND MATT KOCH

ROME FOR AG MINISTER COUNSELOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#) [GR](#) [BIOTECH](#)

SUBJECT: FY 2006 FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR
BIOTECHNOLOGY

REF: SECSTATE 233448

1. (U) Greece would like to be considered among the Posts eligible to receive allocation in FY 06 on biotech projects. Post proposes the organization of an Education Seminar to educate and influence participants resulting in greater acceptance of biotech products that will pave the way for the sale of more U.S. genetics.

2. (U) Greece is an import dependent country for field crop seeds for planting, soybeans and soybean meal and produces the eighty percent of EU cotton. Due to GM content, field crop seeds are not imported at levels expected (CY2004 corn seed imports amounted \$24.7 million, while cotton seed imports amounted \$16.7 million. Sixty to seventy percent of them are of U.S. origin). In addition to cotton, newly developed US GM corn varieties are of interest to Greek farmers. Greece imports approximately 4,600 tons of corn seed for planting and 5,000 tons of cotton seed annually. Given the fact that corn is the second key spring crop for Greece and that GM cotton varieties may gradually be approved by the Commission, educating farmers and government officials will have a long run positive effect on imports from the U.S. of GM varieties in the framework of the EU coexistence policies, provided that Government of Greece will accept to proceed with experimental cultivations in Greek soil. Although a number of GM corn varieties are registered to the EU variety catalogue, it will be subject of discussion among companies, farmer organizations and government officials for the purpose to apply such trials within EU soil. Greece has not crafted coexistence legislation at this time.

3. (U) Program details per REF follow:

Cost of the Program: \$5,000 (not including the US speaker)
Target Audience: Greek farmers, cooperatives and policy makers, approximately 200 people.
Specific Biotech issues to be addressed: Environmental and agricultural benefits available through use of no-till and other biotech. A U.S. speaker will be requested to present the latest developments in this area through PA. Post plans to coordinate this activity with a Greek Agricultural University.
Proposed length of the program: One day
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